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SPEECHES
ON
ARMY REFORM

DELIVERED SINCE THE SESSION

BY

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M.P. FOR THE BORDER BURGHIS

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1870

LONDON: PRINTED BY
STOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

SPEECHES

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THESE SPEECHES are published—not because there is anything special in style or treatment to distinguish them from other speeches made at public meetings by Members of Parliament who give their minds to what they say—but because the subject therein discussed is one which is sure to be dealt with next Session, and about which the constituencies (taken somewhat unprepared by the rush of events) have not had full time to inform themselves. We are now beginning to appreciate the consequences of the habitual apathy with which military matters have been regarded by the great majority of those who take an active part in our political movements. At a moment when an organic change is certain to be effected in the constitution of our army—when the direction which that change shall take is, whether we wish it or not, by far the most important question of the day—we discover at the eleventh hour that, owing mainly to the chronic indifference of Liberal politicians, the conduct of our army has passed from the hands of the nation into the hands of a clique. A single example will suffice to show the plight to which long misgovernment has reduced us. Speaking of the principles which should govern the promotion of officers, General Trochu says: ‘With regard to arms, food, dress, equipment, we lavish on the administration a superfluity of care, and of precautions against fraud or error. The number of processes of audit and control, whose object is to check expense, are infinite. Promotion, *the cornerstone of the military edifice*, is not the subject of so much thought and attention. And yet promotion is the great problem for the authorities to solve; for the *morale* of armies depends directly

on the confidence which they feel in the spirit which rules the distribution of rewards.' How do our authorities solve that problem? The high officer of State, who is charged with the discipline of our army and the appointment and advancement of its officers, defends the system of promotion by Purchase on the express ground that he is unequal to the responsibility of selecting the commanders of our battalions!

There are strong indications of a determination to resist any essential change; and no wonder, considering the enormous interests involved in the maintenance of the *status quo*. The Army Agents alone receive 40,000*l.* a year from the public, not one halfpenny of which should be paid after the 1st of April next. It is painful to think that such a job should have outlasted the second year of a householder Parliament, led by a Liberal Government.* But, when viewed according to the ordinary rules of right and wrong, sense and folly, the whole system appears so utterly indefensible that, as far as I am aware, no first-class paper on either side in politics has attempted to defend it since this controversy began. I have, however, been told in private that I ought to attack the Secretary of State for War, and not the Commander-in-Chief, who is merely an executive officer. The question is not one of attacking anybody. The duty of public men at this crisis is, not to abuse the Minister, but to point out to his notice, and to the notice of their countrymen, the obstacles which stand in the way of an effective reform. One of those obstacles I believe to be the existence in the most critical of all posts, with the patronage of the army virtually in his hands, of an officer, powerful with the prestige of long tenure of office and exalted social rank, who makes no secret of holding reactionary opinions on the most vital military questions. When we consider that this officer advises the Secretary of War throughout the course of his reforms, and will be charged with carrying those reforms

* That eminent public servant, Sir William Anderson, before the Army and Ordnance Committee of 1850, throws a clear light on the great cost to the nation resulting from the complication of accounts, and the unnecessary increase of the outstanding unproductive balances, resulting from the employment of the Army Agents. His evidence, in fact, amounts to this: that if the duties which these gentlemen perform were withdrawn from them, and concentrated in our public departments, besides the great administrative advantages arising from the shortening of official processes and the simplification of the public accounts, *the country would gain pecuniarily even though it continued to pay them 40,000*l.* a year for doing nothing whatever.*

into practical execution, there is grave reason to fear that the Government may take wrong measures, or half-measures, (which in the affairs of war are the worst measures of all), and that, after having wasted a Session and many millions, we may find ourselves as far as ever from a rational and durable military system.

There is nothing in these pages that can produce misconception, except in minds determined beforehand to misconceive. While abolishing the sinecure colonelcies, I would replace them with adequate pensions distributed by rule and not by favour. For appointment by Purchase I would substitute,—not systematic promotion from the ranks, (which Lord Elcho, in his letter of November 28, appears to regard as the sole alternative),—but the machinery which secures us our own admirable Artillery and Engineer officers. And in the place of advancement by Purchase I would adopt the principle of Seniority, tempered by a large admixture of Selection, which prevails in different forms and degrees in the Prussian and French armies, and in our Navy, and Indian and Home Civil Services. When told that the absence of Purchase causes the block in the Ordnance Corps, I would ask in what pigeon-hole the scheme of Retirement recommended by Mr. Childers' Committee, which gave such general satisfaction to the officers of those corps, has been allowed to lie for the past three years. Mr. Childers has carried the principles of that scheme into effect in his own department; and the benefit which he has conferred on the sister service should have shamed our military authorities into an act of bare justice towards a body of officers who have borne neglect, and the consciousness of a position and prospects rapidly becoming intolerable, with a temper which shows how little truth there is in the theory that public servants, who have earned their position by open competition, must be exceptionally self-seeking and obtrusive of their claims.

In conclusion, I am aware of having used some hard words; but I am consoled by noticing that, as one Member of Parliament after another looks into the question, he expresses the result of his enquiries in very much the same language. The last and worst among our administrative abuses of the first order will not fall before assailants who are in the humour to pick pretty phrases. But the efforts of

smaller men will be of little avail until some one who has already worked his way into the Cabinet and the confidence of the whole country can bring himself to lay aside all petty considerations and stake his future upon the Reform of our Army.

I.

EXTRACT FROM A SPEECH AT SELKIRK, OCTOBER 11, 1870.

THE first effect produced upon our country by the state of things abroad has been to turn the attention of the press and the public to our military condition. Everybody who has ever been considered, or who has considered himself, to be an authority on army matters, is coming to the front with his scheme; and it is no time for the advanced Liberal party to be silent. Unfortunately that party has very little to say upon army questions, and appears to imagine that those questions are altogether out of its province. I remember very well, on the eve of an army debate in which I was personally concerned, asking a distinguished member of the Liberal party to help us with a speech. He replied to the effect that he wished our cause well, but that he was not willing to take part in a discussion on military details. The consequence of this abstention on the part of popular representatives is, that up to this time the nation has had little or nothing to say as to the concerns and interests of the national army; and, in the absence of the master's eye, (for, however unpalatable that sentiment may be in influential circles, I hold that the nation is the master of the army), our military system has fallen into such a plight that it is contemptible to all foreign observers, and lamentable and hopeless to those among ourselves who know something of its true condition. Hopeless it indeed is—absolutely hopeless—unless the people of this country take into their own hands the Military question, as they have taken successively the reform of Parliament, the Corn Laws, and the question of Religious Equality. If you continue to trust your army to class mismanagement—if you persist in regarding military organisation and administration as distasteful subjects, uncongenial to the mind of Liberal politicians—you will be punished in two ways. First, you will spend every year

vast sums of money without getting your money's worth, and at every periodical recurrence of panic, and every petty colonial war, you will be called upon for an enormous additional outlay, the amount of which no man can name: for under the present system our army is an abyss into which hundreds of millions might be poured without producing any permanent benefit. And, secondly, if ever we have a real war to the knife with a first-class Power—a war which shall tax our resources to the utmost—we shall infallibly be overtaken by a calamity such as no one who loves his country cares to contemplate. A few facts are worth more than any quantity of generalities. We have at this moment something between seventy and eighty thousand regular troops in the island. We have, it is true, some hundreds of thousands of Militia and Volunteers; but no one, who knows what is what, believes for a moment that in their present embryo condition our Reserve forces could be relied on to serve in the field for a month together against regular troops. I know nothing more cruel than the manner in which our citizen army has been left without organisation, without staff, without responsible and trained officers, without equipment, and without enforced discipline, and has then been taken to task for deficiencies which are none of its making. It has supplied all that it could be called on to bring—zeal, intelligence, and patience—a military virtue which it certainly possesses in a high degree. It was for its rulers to provide the rest. Well, then, with seventy or eighty thousand regular troops, scattered among a multitude of tiny battalions, and unprovided with any copious or efficient reserve for instant supply of trained soldiers, we could at the most put into line, on a fortnight's notice, forty thousand men. One year with another, the French army costs about as much as our own, and the Prussian army infinitely less; and it certainly is no exaggeration to say that the French and the Prussian War Departments, on a fortnight's notice, actually put into line of battle a quarter of a million and half a million of men respectively. I say nothing of the preparations which we have at hand for feeding and conveying our troops, for supplying them with ammunition in the field, and for taking them off it when they are wounded or sick. As to the details of our administration, it were well to read Lord Elcho's

letters, whose account of our military abuses is masterly and exact, though, from what he has said on certain occasions in the House of Commons, it is to be feared that he is not prepared to adopt the essential remedies. But the men themselves must be provided before they are fed, conveyed, or cured ; and a beggarly account of forty thousand fighting men is all the home defence we get for our thirteen or fifteen millions of pounds a year.

We have compared our army with the armies of our foreign neighbours. Let us look at home, and compare it with our own navy. Since this Government came in, up to the commencement of the present war, the War Department and the Admiralty have diminished their estimates, the former by about two millions and a half, and the latter by about two millions. It would not be an unfair assertion that they have both made a saving of 22 per cent. How was the saving made in each case ? The Admiralty economised by adapting our naval force to the exigencies of modern warfare, and rigorously cutting off every source of expense which the march of time had rendered obsolete and superfluous ; by making a radical alteration in their system of buying and selling, and introducing sound commercial principles into official transactions ; and by reducing useless offices and paring exuberant salaries. The Admiralty office began to cost steadily 12,000*l.* less every year. In the dockyards, while the wages of the men were reduced twenty-seven and a half per cent., the salaries of the officers were reduced thirty-eight per cent. Mr. Childers went upon this principle, that everyone who was nominally a fighting man should be able to fight ; so, by pensioning off crowds of superannuated ship-keepers, officers' servants, and others who, in naval parlance, are called idlers, and by insisting that every Coastguardsman should be physically fit for service, he diminished largely our nominal effective and our actual expenditure, without dangerously lowering our fighting force. Meanwhile he cashiered the old wooden ships by the dozen, which in peace cost millions to repair, and in war would have merely served as floating charnel-houses for their crews ; and, by the simple expedient of substituting for the old wooden coastguard vessels fine ironclads ready for service within forty-eight hours, gave us, as it were, a reserve Channel fleet without a farthing of expense. And not only did he make

his economies without diminishing our force of men, and while largely increasing our force of ships, but the rigorous reform which he imposed on the administrative departments increased their efficiency and the simplicity of their action, at the same time that it lessened their cost. That is the sure reward of bold and careful departmental reform. Meanwhile, the War Department was engaged in sending about their business twenty odd thousand effective soldiers. No alteration was made in the system of buying and selling—that self-same system which Mr. Baxter was engaged in reforming in the sister department, amidst the almost unanimous approbation of the House of Commons. There was no docking of salaries in high quarters that was worth the naming. The immediate *entourage* of the Commander-in-Chief continued to absorb sums which, when added to military pay, show very largely by the side of the modest appointments enjoyed by the admirals and captains employed in our central naval administration. In point of fact, the reduction in the army estimates was mainly due to a rough sweeping deduction from our fighting strength—a very proper measure, if proportional economies had been made in other quarters, and if a machinery had been set on foot by which the gaps in our battalions might have been at once supplied in time of need, and those battalions supplemented by an effective second line of battle. In the navy, the reductions fell upon the upper classes and the commercial interests—on the high-salaried officers as well as the artisans, and on the privileged contractors. In the army, they fell upon the private soldier. And, in consequence, as long as things went quietly, the Admiralty came in for very hard words from people who had suffered, and who were influential enough to make their voices heard, while the War Department got nothing but praise. But, when the war-clouds began to lower, the tables were turned, and people showed their confidence in our naval administration by the strongest of all testimony—that of ceasing to criticise; while everybody who had a tongue or a pen came forward as an army critic or reformer. We must not be too ready to blame Mr. Cardwell. No one can possibly have worked harder, or with a more earnest desire for the public welfare. But he is hampered by the fetters which have hindered the action of every War Minister

who has preceded him. This is no time to mince matters. There exists at the Horse Guards a very powerful influence, which is exerted in a reactionary sense. As long as the officer commanding-in-chief is opposed by constitution and training to innovation, so long the tendency in the army to reform will be effectually kept in check. Those among our officers who wish to see important changes carried through dare not speak out. His Royal Highness has great knowledge of military detail, and high public spirit, but his ideas are not in accordance with the necessities of the hour. The most necessary preliminary for an effective reorganisation is to place at the head of our army a soldier who is an intelligent and an uncompromising reformer. From the day that such a soldier (and we have such) is at that post, all the intelligence and enlightenment which is at present latent in our service will come to the front. The army will, so to speak, turn its better side uppermost, and, to a surprising extent, will reform itself. I have now been behind the scenes ; and I know very well how hopeless navy reform would have been if the First Naval Lord had been an admiral strongly opposed to searching radical reorganisation, virtually irresponsible to Parliament, and virtually independent of the First Lord. I know very well that we have been told in Parliament that the Commander-in-Chief is subordinate to the Minister at War. He may be so in name. In reality, you cannot alter by an Order in Council the position which His Royal Highness has held for so many years ; nor can you turn him into an army reformer by a stroke of the pen.

Mr. Cardwell has likewise to struggle against the insidious but overwhelming strength of the Purchase system—a system which does not allow of our withdrawing officers from regiments where there are too many, or of transferring them to our Militia and Volunteer regiments ; and which, therefore, is an absolute bar to the amalgamation, in any degree, of our various lines of defence. Conceive a state of things in which an officer who, at the crisis of a war, was removed into a regiment where his services were needed, lost upwards of thirteen thousand pounds by this token of the approbation of his superiors ! Suppose the case of a threatened invasion. The Militia would be crying out for trained officers ; but the Commander-in-Chief could not transfer those officers from their

regiments without inflicting on them fines of thousands of pounds apiece. It is incredible that the people of this country should endure a system which renders the army a monopoly, and which in time of war places their own children under the command of men who have purchased their way to high responsibility. We have just now thrown open the civil service to free competition. Our artillery and engineer officers have long been appointed by free competition, and those two corps are the admiration of Europe. I have heard it said in the House of Commons, that the tone of our mess-rooms would be lowered by throwing open the service to the nation. If it is lowered to the tone of our artillery mess-rooms, I for one should be very well satisfied. Our officers should be appointed, as a general rule, from a military college, to which they should enter by open competition—as recommended in the case of Sandhurst in the Report of the Commission of Military Education—a Report which has met with treatment which affords a painful indication how potent an influence the worst military prejudices still exercise over the action of our War Office. Till you abolish Purchase; till you throw open as rewards to our private soldiers that immense mass of minor civil appointments which at present are used as an indirect method of corrupting our constituencies; till you make short service in the ranks the rule; till you do away with the petty vexations and restrictions which martinetts love to inflict upon the soldier; till you place at the head of the discipline and promotion of the army a man who has the new ideas at heart, you will never have a national army; and, what is more to the purpose at the present moment, you will never have an efficient system of national defence. You will go on spending your money like water, and will get nothing in return but panic and humiliation. You want men in authority who can act and dare; who are afraid of, or partial to, no classes or organisations or interests whatsoever. Neither Volunteers, nor Militia, nor Yeomanry, nor Pensioners should receive one farthing from the public unless they are fit in all respects to meet an enemy in the field. It is questionable whether payment by results to bodies independent of the public service is a success in the case of National Education. I am sure that it is ruin in the case of National Defence. Our army should be localised, not in name

only, but in reality. Each regiment should be recruited from a certain district, and quartered in that district while at home. The Militia should be the second or third battalions of the regiment of their own district, and there should be a free circulation of officers throughout all the battalions of the same regiment. When an officer in the Service battalion wished to marry and settle, he should pass to the Militia battalion, which would then be officered partly by professional officers, and partly by young men of the neighbourhood, who would have the obligation and the opportunity to make themselves fully efficient. With our present army reconstituted on a local basis, and with 150,000 militiamen and men of the Reserve organised under a permanent local Divisional Staff, and amalgamated with the line, our country would be absolutely safe from invasion; and, before long, we should find that the new system was as much cheaper as better than the old. That the two main elements of the reform—the abolition of Purchase and the shortening of the term of service—will occasion certain and valuable economies, I am bound to show to the Chamber of Commerce at Edinburgh to-morrow week.

II.

ADDRESS TO A MEETING AT EDINBURGH, CALLED TOGETHER BY THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, ON OCTOBER 19, 1870.

I WILL preface what I have got to say by assuring anyone who is at all nervous about what may be going to happen that I am fully conscious that a Chamber of Commerce is not a political assembly; and that I will take care that no member of the Chamber, and no private citizen who has come here under its auspices, shall be offended, even if he should hold the most opposite party views from those taken by myself. The question of the army is not a party question; it is a national question. It is good that it is not a party question, and it is also not good. Good, because, owing to its not being an affair of party, we come to it

as a *res integra*, without having hitherto got any prejudices on the matter. Not good, because it has shared the fate of all questions in this country which are not party questions—that is to say, it has met with pretty general indifference and inattention. It is most astonishing—I do not hesitate to use a word that may seem impertinent and even rude in an assembly of my countrymen—to notice the ignorance of the British public in regard to everything relating to the army that is really essential to its organisation. There is a great deal known about methods of drill, about the bores for guns, about the glitter and cut of the uniforms, about the pattern of rifles, and about the names and rank of the officers; but how much the army costs, and to what extent it is efficient as compared with other armies, not much is known. You may think, gentlemen, that administration is not a proper subject for a Chamber of Commerce. But if administration is not a proper subject, there is no doubt that finance is; and I will read you some remarks on the question of finance, as connected with administration, which have been made by one who has no superior in the capacity of a zealous and acute administrator—Mr. Stansfeld, the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Stansfeld, in the first Report of the Committee on War Office Administration, says: ‘There are two totally different conceptions of financial control between which it appears to us necessary to choose. The first and more or less traditionary one is that the administrative departments are to be distrusted, watched, and checked, and that the function of finance, from this point of view, is confined to such watching, criticising, and checking their expenditure. The second and more modern notion of financial control means the union of finance and administration, so that financial considerations may attend and determine administrative policy from its inception, as well as control it in its progress.’ Finance as a mere check upon administration is the greatest delusion among all the most dangerous delusions that have ever beguiled the public. There is a limit to the notion of having one department whose sole business it is to produce efficiency, and spend whatever money it can screw out of another department whose sole business it is to keep in check the extravagance of its neighbour. You know well enough what would happen if a private concern was managed on that

principle ; and it is exactly that which has happened in our public offices. The real cause of the success of Mr. Childers consists in his being a Minister who knows his own Estimates ; and for the best of reasons, because his Estimates were made to represent his administrative reforms, and not his reforms to suit his Estimates. When he spoke to the House of Commons—and I appeal to any of the members of Parliament present on this point—it was evident that, while he was using words, he was all the while thinking of the things which those words represented. It is a fatal mark of a bad administrator that he does not know the things with which he has to do, but is familiar only with figures and phrases. The proof that Mr. Childers and Mr. Baxter knew what they were dealing with in substance, and not merely in name, is that their economies are made proportionally throughout every department of the Admiralty. You will not find any particular item on which an enormous reduction is shown ; but you will find honest saving upon almost every item throughout the whole expenditure, which fact represents the accurate knowledge that the administrators have of the affairs they are administering. Therefore, I do not hesitate to speak on administration to a Chamber of Commerce, because it is utterly idle to touch on finance unless you deal with administration as a sister subject. Well, then, what is the cost of our army ? In 1868–9 it stood us at 15,455,000*l.*, or about fifteen millions and a half ; in 1869–70 it cost 14,111,000*l.* ; in 1870–71 it cost within 25,000*l.* of thirteen millions ; that is to say, over these three years the average cost has exceeded fourteen millions. The force of the army in England at the present moment is—of field and horse artillery, 180 guns, and 5,950 men to serve these guns in the field. Several newspapers have made a calculation, and discovered that these men are not sufficient to work the guns in the field, and therefore they say, that instead of 180 guns, we ought to call them 120. Then we have 11,000 cavalry, and 57,274 infantry. The reserve of old soldiers of any sort of efficiency is 8,000. These make up 82,000 men. Of this number, 10,000 are scattered about the seventy-eight depôts, and are simply recruiting, and drilling, and being drilled for regiments now in India. That leaves us 72,000. We must then deduct ten per cent. for sick,

for recruits lately joined, for people employed as orderlies, clerks, hospital servants, and other such categories. The entire force we have for fighting in England is thus 65,000, of which it is certainly not too much to say that we should require at least 30,000 men to secure Ireland, and to form the nucleus of a garrison for those important fortresses, where there are works and material of far greater military value than in any foreign fortresses whatever—I mean the works of Chatham, Plymouth, and Portsmouth. It is a very small thing to say that we should require to take 30,000 men for these purposes. That leaves us 35,000 men that we can put in line for our fourteen millions a year; exactly the size of one strong Prussian corps at exactly twice the cost of the entire Prussian army! We talk about the maladministration of France; but in France—with all the unparalleled extravagance—with all the certain waste and the suspected corruption—for an expenditure of fourteen millions a year the Emperor put into the field a quarter of a million soldiers ready to fight at the moment. Now, then, what is the cause of this state of things? Remember this, that war is a possibility, and panics are a periodical certainty. If we had either a panic or war we must put the country into a state of real and not of seeming defence, and on our present system that would cost us thirty millions a year: which in itself cuts the ground from under the feet of those who maintain that our system is tenable.

There is no more striking proof of the want of interest displayed by the nation in the management of its own military affairs than the existence of a notion that the purchase system, with all its faults, is a cheap system. So far is this from being the case, that the abolition of it (besides being an essential preliminary for doing anything in the way of army reform) would be the cause of great and immediate economies. A bad system cannot be a cheap one, any more than a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit. In the first place, our army is greatly over-officered in all corps where purchase prevails. In these corps there are something over 2,900 officers to something over 58,000 rank and file, or 1 officer to 20 men. In the Prussian army there is 1 officer to 49 men; in the Austrian, 1 to 40; in the French, 1 to 33. If in our own service we compare the

purchase with the non-purchase corps, we find that, while a regiment of Life Guards requires 27 officers to 407 men, two batteries of Horse Artillery, containing very nearly the same number of men, are officered to the admiration of Europe by 10 regimental officers. We may look for the cause of this in the evidence of some outspoken soldiers before the Purchase Commission of 1856-7. General Sir Thomas Franks says: 'If a man knows that, with very little attention, and a smattering of knowledge, and lots of money, he is certain to get on, he is not likely to pay proper attention to his duties. I conceive that as long as men think that money and interest will forward them in the service they will not devote themselves to their profession.' In fact, when a man has spent so much on his commissions that the pay is barely the interest on his capital, he is apt to feel that he owes little or nothing to the public. He has bought his position. May he not do what he likes with his own? To expect a Captain and Lieutenant-Colonel in the Guards, who has paid 8,500*l.* for his rank, to stick to his work in time of peace like an engineer or an artilleryman who earned his commission by open competition, is as sanguine as to ask an M.P. who has bought a rotten borough to show as often on the division-list as one who has been returned gratis by a large constituency. The principal expense, however, of the system lies in the enormous sums paid yearly, partly to compensate officers for their losses by purchase, partly to facilitate the transactions connected with purchase, and partly to enable officers to be promoted who cannot afford to purchase. To meet these objects, the Half-Pay List has been diverted from its proper function of providing for officers invalided or out of employment for temporary reasons, and swollen to the amount of 365,000*l.* a year. We pay, besides, 73,000*l.* a year to generals, irrespective of their being employed, and 162,000*l.* a year to the holders of honorary sinecure Colonelcies—a horrid scandal in a hardworking practical nation, where no one should be paid except in the shape of wages for the work which he is doing, or an impartial and certain pension for the work which he has done. We have been told that these Colonelcies answer to Civil Service pensions. But the essential conditions of a pension are, that it should be calculated on a fixed proportion to amount of salary and

time of service; that it should go by right, and not by favour; and that it should not be paid at the same time as salary. None of these conditions do the Colonelcies fulfil. Of two Generals of equal service and merit, but unequal social position and interest, one will get a sinecure worth 1,350*l.*, 1,800*l.*, 2,200*l.*, per annum, while another will have to content himself with 25*s.* a day. And, so far from these so-called pensions not being held at the same time as salary, there is hardly a single high military officer in the War Department of London who does not sooner or later enjoy his Colonelcy at the same time that he draws his salary.* In the same way, giving unattached promotion without duties is a violation of the first law of judicious administration, which demands that rank should always imply service—a principle which Mr. Childers has vindicated in his recent sweeping changes in a manner which has nowhere given so much satisfaction as in the navy itself. Till we fix a working establishment of officers from generals downwards, and promote only within that establishment, there will be no end to expenditure and facilities for jobbery. Imagine a general list of unemployed judges or bishops, and a vast staff of ‘unattached’ school inspectors, and commissioners of bankruptcy! Then the 27,000*l.* a year for distinguished services, and the 155,000*l.* a year for widows’ pensions, are to a great extent given to compensate officers who have not been lucky enough to get honorary Colonelcies, and the families of deceased officers, for the sums which have been sunk in buying commissions. The abolition of purchase would put

* The pay of colonels of regiments is nowhere separately shown in the army estimates, as retired allowances ought to be. The last time that it was picked out from the separate regimental schedules it amounted to 162,050*l.* The manner in which the accounts of our army are shown imposes on outside army reformers the necessity of making the most laborious and delicate calculations, and is an effectual protection to a system which can only be defended in the dark. If the sums paid to the military officers at the Horse Guards in salaries, pay or half-pay, honorary colonelcies, and other sources, were gathered into a single page, the public indignation would be extreme. It is deeply to be regretted that this great abuse, the fruitful parent of other abuses, has not been materially remedied in the scheme of reduction and re-organisation of the War Office departments laid on the table of the House towards the close of last session. The clerks suffer. The immediate *clientèle* of the Commander-in-Chief retains almost all its emoluments. It is a real injustice to hard-working, responsible officers, such as the Adjutant-General will be under the new system, that they should be shown in the same list as His Royal Highness’s Military Secretary, the standing abuse of our public service.

an end to mulcting officers of the means of providing for their families. A widow would live far more comfortably and independently on the 5,000*l.* or 10,000*l.* which her husband has sunk on his commission, than on a pension of 50*l.* or 100*l.* a year. If anyone doubts that all this outlay is intended in a great measure as compensation for losses by purchase, let him read the Duke of Wellington's evidence in 1833 before the Select Committee on Army and Navy Appointments, and notice the effect produced by it on the report of the Committee, and he will doubt no longer. And, after all, it was only money thrown away; for, instead of benefiting the officers as a class, it went to swell the prices of the commission market. If a commodity is allowed to be sold, it will go for exactly what it is worth; and every boon you bestow on the army, from a good-service pension to a few halfpence a day for forage, will show itself before long in the increased price of commissions. You cannot raise the pay of officers till you extinguish purchase. But the greatest abuse connected with purchase is the payment, one year with another, of 40,000*l.* to the Army Agents, through whose hands passes the money paid in these transactions, whether secret or public, legal or illicit; for every penny paid above the regulation price belongs to the latter class. The officers' pay should be handled by the paymasters. Their private accounts any banker should be glad to keep. All that these gentlemen perform in return for the 40,000*l.* a year extracted from the pockets of an unconscious public, in the shape of transactions connected with purchase, had far better be left undone. It is deeply to be regretted that the interests of a few wealthy and influential individuals should, year after year, outweigh in the minds of our Ministers the interests of the nation.

Let us see then how the account stands. The Committee appointed by the War Office in 1857 calculated that purchase could be abolished for 2,355,288*l.* Adding one-third for the extra regulation prices, the compensation required would amount to 3,140,384*l.* This calculation is certainly not understated, for it was a calculation made in opposition to a lower figure put forward by the army reformers of the day. Abolish the army agencies, and you at once save the interest on one-third of the capital sum required to abolish purchase. Of the reduction which might be made in the number of

regimental officers you may judge of by this, that Mr. Cardwell this year, in moving the Estimates, asked for 509,000*l.* in order to abolish the rank of Ensign, and make a partial reduction of officers ; and he promised a consequent saving of 148,000*l.* a year—no bad interest, as he observed, on such a capital. He had, indeed, omitted to take the over-regulation price into calculation ; but even with this modification the sum is very promising to those who wish to get rid of purchase without injuring the interests of officers. Those interests we must consult. It is the very tenderness shown by British reformers for existing interests which renders British reforms so solid and so durable. And now, to proceed with our account. The reduction in the number of officers, the abolition of the army agencies, and the substitution of adequate pensions for the honorary Colonelcies, are so many downright savings. We have, besides, as a field to operate upon, the half-pay list, the widows' pensions, and the payments to general officers, and for distinguished services—a total sum of nearly 700,000*l.* a year—on which immense economies would in time be made. The only *per contra* items are—the full-pay retirement, now amounting to 127,000*l.* a year, which would be largely augmented as the legitimate method of compensating officers for their past services ; and the increase which, after the abolition of purchase, we should be justified in making to the pay of our subaltern officers. Placing one item against another, the most ordinary good management would give us an annual saving which would far more than pay the interest on the capital sum required to abolish purchase. But to this we must add the vast indirect economies which would result from taking affairs out of the hands of a privileged class, and entrusting the command and administration of our army to men who have earned, and not bought, their way to the top of the tree. The military men, who are employed in the Commander-in-Chief's office in London, are the successful men of the army, many of whom have profited by the existing system, and are proportionably unable to see the defects of it ;* and the same may

* These gentlemen touch 21,500*l.* a year in addition to their pay, half-pay, honorary Colonelcies, distinguished-service money, or whatever else they enjoy in the way of stipends : while the three naval officers who assist the First Lord of the Admiralty in parallel capacities are content with 2,865*l.* for their collective civil services.

he said of the military members of the House of Commons and the House of Peers, who, from the nature of their position, are almost all men who have gained by a state of things which favours the rich. Who can estimate the economy that would result if every regiment and every military station was superintended by an officer who had risen by merit, and not by the length of his purse? Of the increased military security of the nation I do not speak, for we are now treating of the cost of the present system, and not of its efficiency. Happily, efficiency and economy are never at odds; and in insisting on the one, we shall invariably find that we are promoting the other.

This holds in a remarkable degree with regard to the manning of our army. Our habit of bribing soldiers to return to the ranks at an age when they are just ceasing to be useful as soldiers, and long after they have lost the power of being useful as citizens, costs more money than any other of our numerous administrative errors. General Trochu, the first of living military authorities, forewarned his countrymen that they were ruining their army by their fondness for old soldiers—a fondness which is faint compared with the passion for that class entertained by the Horse Guards. None should be entitled to a pension except non-commissioned officers who are kept for the instruction of others, and men who have been disabled by wounds or disease during their term of service. Beyond this, the whole sums spent in pensions, second bounties for kits, extra pay on re-engagement, goes to keep men in the ranks who had better be out of them for their own sake, for the sake of the community, and for the sake of the army. This sum is startling in amount. The charge for out-pensions for 1870–1 is 1,220,100*l.*; for in-pensions, 36,000*l.*; and about 54,000*l.* more for the enrolment of pensioners under staff-officers: the object of which is to get further work out of the old men, and exercise a benevolent superintendence over them. Add to this the kit-bounties and extra pay, and the share which old soldiers have in the cost of martial law and hospital treatment—a share, very large, owing to the demoralisation caused by long military service and military celibacy. Martial law, and the expenses and pay of men in prison, amount to the disgraceful figure of nearly 90,000*l.* a year;

while the hospital vote for 1870-1 is 247,500*l.*, besides the cost of the Contagious Diseases Acts, which would lose their meaning when our army no longer contained a large admixture of aimless elderly bachelors, but consisted entirely of young men with their business to learn and no leisure for dissipation—looking forward to returning to civil life by the age at which a sensible man begins to think of marrying. There can be no doubt that, if the Short Service Act was vigorously worked by men who believed in it, the saving would be three-quarters of a million a year. A soldier should never be re-enlisted, except as a non-commissioned officer; and should pass in the reserve as many years at the end of his time as the necessities of the service will permit. Militiamen should be enlisted for twelve years, the first year of which should be passed in the barracks. At the end of the year the young man should have the option of continuing in the militia—being called out for ten days or a fortnight in the year—or of enlisting in the line. Without the preliminary year's drill you cannot make militiamen soldiers; and, when they have once been turned into soldiers by that year's drill, the present period of annual training may be very considerably shortened. To keep on foot a force of 150,000 militiamen, we should require an annual contingent of something over 13,000 men. I have no fear that we should get that number of young fellows to join a force which they saw was a reality. I must earnestly protest against the notion of adopting the ballot as a sort of poor-law test to drive people into the volunteers. The last thing the volunteer force stands in need of is increase of numbers; and to bring the volunteers into competition with the militia is virtually to injure the latter force, which, after the regular army, is the most trustworthy reliance of the country in time of danger. To bear the terrible stress and hardship of a campaign, men must be absolutely in the power of their officers, and that no voluntary troops ever were or ever will be. The militia should be officered partly by officers of the line, taken from the first battalions of the regiment of which theirs is the second or third battalion, and partly by local officers who have patriotism enough to begin, like the men, with a year's continuous service, of which, in my opinion, six months should be spent in the ranks. The Prussian

Landwehr is officered by officers of the regular army who have left it while still fit for service, and by young men who volunteer to serve one year in the ranks at their own expense, and have then obtained a certificate of fitness. We must cease making our army a job and our reserves a toy. The spectacle of officers holding commissions in two or three corps at once, and going in for as much efficiency as will earn 50s. according to the new scale of payment for military results, is unique in the history of the world. The State ought to fix the standard of efficiency, and insist that all its servants should reach that standard. The force which I have described is quite sufficient. With our fleet as a first line-of-battle it is useless to multiply men beyond our powers of organisation and administration, and beyond what is sufficient for the defence of the country. We ought to gain something by being the first naval Power in the world. In order to utilise this amount of infantry, we should have at least fifty batteries of six guns able to take the field within a fortnight. A wise Ministry of War will keep its scientific and administrative services, and to a great degree its cavalry, in a far more matured condition than the mass of its infantry. It is no time for delay. To set the new system going will take years; but when once in full swing it will last for centuries, and will every year go more smoothly and more cheaply, because it is adapted to the wants of the present, and not to the traditions of the past, and because it is founded on our old national scheme of defence. To defer taking out our policy of national insurance on the ground that the immediate danger is past would be unwise if army reform were a matter of a month. It is madness when it is a matter of years. Again, the organisation must not only begin at once, but it must be complete. Nothing conduced so much to the ruin of the Emperor of France as his taking one-half of a new system without having the determination to accept it in all its parts. He relied on the Mobiles, but did not venture to turn them into soldiers. And, in order that the change should be prompt and complete, it should be carried through by men who have their hearts in the business. I tremble to think what would be the cost of bit-by-bit reform proceeding under the auspices of the Horse Guards. You cannot sew new cloth into that old garment.

Do not comfort yourselves with the idea that a gradual and quiet improvement is going forward. When army reform begins in earnest you will hear it from one end of the kingdom to the other. The first few months of administrative reorganisation always make noise out of proportion to the magnitude of the work. Experienced ears listen in vain for the signs of that painful and difficult process. A Minister who is to do anything should be surrounded by subordinates who not only work with him, but are constantly urging him to action in their own departments. If he is wise, he will appoint such men, (especially among the officers who belong to the profession with the administration of which he is concerned,) that his function will be to regulate and restrain, not to wring every successive reform from the very persons who should initiate it. Such a band of administrators, working around him with mutual sympathy and emulation, will render his task, not light indeed, but possible, and will encourage him to face cheerfully labour, criticism, and responsibility.

III.

SPEECH AT A PUBLIC MEETING AT BRIGHTON, CALLED
BY THE LIBERAL ASSOCIATION, OCTOBER 23, 1870.

SINCE this subject was started, it is curious to observe how few Members of Parliament have declared against the abolition of Purchase; but among the criticisms which require answer is a semi-official speech of Mr. Parker to his constituents at Perth. I call it semi-official, because that is the only theory on which to account for a Liberal member speaking at length on army matters, at a time like this, without uttering one word of protest against the vast abuses which disfigure our military system. No man has a right to complain of having his figures and statements honourably challenged; and I would not object to anything which Mr. Parker said about me, if he had only uttered on the same occasion a syllable of sympathy for the cause. But, at a time when we are fighting an uphill fight against a mass of interests and susceptibilities in high places, it is very

discouraging to be attacked in the rear by the representative of a great Liberal constituency. And what does Mr. Parker say? He objects to my use of the expression ‘tiny battalions,’ and wonders that anyone can cavil at our War Office adopting the system of small battalions with a full staff of officers, because the German army system consists of small battalions and large reserves. But my complaint was that we have taken only one half of the German system. We have got the small battalions: but where are our large reserves? And Elcho answers ‘where?’ in his admirable letter to the *Times*, which anyone who compares the War Office proceedings of the last two years with the great Prussian re-organisation of 1860 should be condemned to learn by heart. Mr. Parker then goes in for showing that the reductions after all were no reductions at all, because all that has been done is to let the annual waste of the army go on without repairing it by recruiting. To use his own expressions, ‘Critics on this point appear to have forgotten that the army, like the human body, is undergoing a continual process of change—wasting away, and repairing itself.’ What we urge is, that the British Army (which, by the bye, is very unlike the human body in this respect—that it has two heads instead of one) was wasting away and was not repairing itself either by recruiting or by the far preferable method of strong reserves. Mr. Parker complains that Lord Enfield accuses the War Office of having got rid of 20,000 trained soldiers. ‘No,’ says Mr. Parker (rather uncivilly), ‘this is a total misstatement. What we did was simply this: we stopped recruiting, and by the natural process of reduction, our army decreased by the numbers which were intended.’ And this to a Scotch audience! Why, if we only stop recruiting for ten or fifteen years, by the natural process of reduction we shall have arrived at having no army at all; and yet, as Mr. Parker truly says, we should not have discharged a single efficient soldier. Next, Mr. Parker is very severe on me for praising the Admiralty for having reduced its own office at the rate of 12,000*l.* a year; while I take no notice of a ‘scheme for the future, towards which the War Office proposes working, which will effect a saving of 60,000*l.*’ There lies the whole case. We had rather have the 24,000*l.* which the Admiralty has saved than the 60,000*l.* which the War Office is going to save; for

the War Office has too often shown an incapacity to take the step which leads from intention to action. It is going to reduce itself to the tune of 60,000*l.* per annum! Eighteen months ago it was going to insist on the efficiency of volunteer officers, 'whatever their social status.' It was going to remodel Sandhurst on the principles of exclusive appointment by open competition. It was going to adopt at Chelsea the scheme which Parliament so warmly approved of for Greenwich, and the result of which has so far exceeded the expectations of Parliament. There was a rumour that it was going to discontinue paying 40,000*l.* a year of the national money to the army agents to remunerate them for being good enough to make their fortunes by banking. It was going to do away with the rank of cornet and ensign. Everything at the War Office is going, and nothing is gone, except the Assistant Under-Secretary, who was a thorough-going opponent of Purchase. A few hostile questions in the House of Commons; a few anonymous letters in the newspapers; a few days of active remonstrance or passive obstruction on the part of the Horse Guards;—and the reform which has been promised or foreshadowed is referred to a Commission or a Departmental Committee, and question after question which is ripe for practical solution goes back into the sphere of endless and fruitless discussion. The fact stands that the second year is drawing to a close, and that the War Office has not yet begun putting a stop to a state of things under which professional merit has to yield to money. As long as Purchase exists it will be impossible to carry out the amalgamation of the militia and the line as battalions in the same regiments—a plan which is warmly advocated by leading journals, and which is sure to approve itself to Mr. Cardwell as the only method of defending the country without incurring ruinous expense, and greatly exceeding our requirements in the number of men. For, in the first place, to obtain this end we must have absolute free trade in officers between the line and the militia; and, in the next place, you cannot possibly call on the nation for the sacrifice which the increase and reorganisation of our militia would imply as long as the command of our army is practically a class monopoly. When I saw a Liberal Government letting year after year pass without pronouncing against the Purchase system—when I saw a

Ministry, which has thrown open the Civil Service to the *élite* of the nation, keep the army as a close preserve for the wealthy and influential,—then I expressed, what is still my belief, that Mr. Cardwell is trammelled in his action by Horse Guards influences; and when Mr. Parker denies to the country the consolation of this belief, I do not think he is doing good service to those whom he defends.

Before leaving this subject I must notice some remarks of Colonel Anson, of whom I wish to speak in all respect,—first, because he is a distinguished soldier, and next, because he supported the abolition of flogging in the army. Colonel Anson says, in a letter to the *Times*, that Mr. Trevelyan ‘roundly abuses a Royal Duke.’ Now, these expressions do not at all represent the manner in which I spoke of the Duke of Cambridge. What I did say was that, with all his high public spirit and great knowledge of military detail, the ideas of His Royal Highness were not in accordance with the necessities of the hour. But even this much I could not have said without a grave breach of private decorum, and without forfeiting the right to be listened to when speaking on a public topic, unless I had been prepared to make my words good. Now, what is the first necessity of the hour? What is the paramount duty of the man who is charged with the fortunes and honour of the whole kingdom? Surely to select the officers who are to lead our soldiers in time of stress and peril! The Commander-in-Chief, giving evidence before the Purchase Commission, is asked, ‘Do you think this principle of selection, which is applicable to colonels of regiments, is applicable also to lieutenant-colonels?’ He answers, ‘I think not. It is perfectly applicable to colonels.’ He is again asked, ‘Will you explain to the Commission why that which is applicable to colonels could not be observed with regard to lieutenant-colonels?’ He replies, ‘Because the colonel does not command a regiment. He is merely the nominal head, and he is selected for services performed in former days, and it is a reward for services. Therefore it is a much easier thing than selecting a man to be actively employed at the head of a regiment.’ And therefore, because His Royal Highness cannot undertake the responsibility of appointing officers to command our battalions, these all-important duties are to be allotted

according to the criterion of the longest purse. Why, the Admiralty does not shrink from nominating commanders to twice as many ships as there are lieutenant-colonels! If the country is ever invaded, where shall we be, when for a long series of years those in authority have had recourse to naming the richest men to the most critical of all commands, because they cannot undertake the task of naming the best? And recollect that the generals who will be entrusted with brigades and divisions, and the general who will have the charge of the operations of the whole army, must be taken from the list of lieutenant-colonels who owe their position to money and not to merit. Then again, when Purchase is abolished, and the officers compensated, it will be a necessity of the hour to have at the head of the army a man who knows how to keep the vicious system from reviving. Purchase will be entirely illegal then, just as any payment from officer to officer above the regulation price of commissions is illegal now. His Royal Highness was asked whether he was aware of the payment of the over-regulation prices. He replies, 'We never know anything about the excess on the regulation price. It is done unknown to us. I am afraid it is done; but quite unofficially. I positively know nothing about it; but of course I have been long enough in the service to know that such things are done, and I am sorry that they are done.' Truly a nice school of honour in which to bring up our young officers! This, at any rate, if nothing else, we borrow from the laws of Lycurgus, that we encourage our young Spartans to engage in a questionable traffic if only they can escape detection. Again, His Royal Highness, when asked by the Commissioners on over-regulation prices whether any means could be devised of checking this abuse, replies: 'I should be delighted, as far as I am concerned, and those connected with me, if anybody could suggest any means by which it could be put a stop to. I am sure that I should be the first to jump at it. But I admit, at the same time, distinctly before this Committee, that I am at a loss to know what rules or regulations could be laid down to prevent a larger sum than the regulated price being paid, because, where money is concerned, it is between man and man, and it is impossible for any authority to check it.' But compare with this what is said by the late Sir Alexander Tulloch, who suggests that

vacant steps, arising from the sale of a commission, should be filled, not by succession in the regiment, but by some of the officers who are seniors for purchase in the general list of the army. 'The immediate results of such an arrangement would be that the retiring officer, not knowing who was likely to be his successor, could make no bargain for any sum above the regulation price.' If this had been judiciously done from time to time, without preliminary warning, by a Commander-in-Chief who was determined to know, officially or unofficially, whether over-regulation prices were paid or not, the system would long ere this have died away. When Mr. Cardwell has abolished Purchase, I am afraid he must get some one who disbelieves in the Purchase system, and knows how to deal with it, or we shall have it back again before many years are out. Again, the essential preliminary to efficient reorganisation is to get the whole War Office under one roof. The first step in Admiralty Reform was to bring as much as possible of the Somerset House staff into the closest possible proximity with the Whitehall branches, at the cost of considerable inconvenience to the gentlemen concerned, who bore that inconvenience in a manner which does great credit to their public spirit. When examined on this topic His Royal Highness said: 'I can say I never found the slightest inconvenience arising from the circumstances that the War Office was in Pall Mall, and the Horse Guards at Whitehall. I do not know how any inconvenience can arise. The duties in the War Office and our duties in the Horse Guards are so distinct that there is no necessity for our being under the same roof, that I can see. Not the slightest.' And again, when asked, 'Do you think there would be any advantage in bringing the War Office nearer the Horse Guards?' he replies, 'Not the slightest. I see no disadvantage in our remaining just as we are; and I never could see any objection to it.' Read, side by side with these expressions, the able Reports of Lord Northbrook, Mr. Stansfeld, Sir Edward Lugard of the War Office, and Sir William Anderson of the Treasury. These gentlemen say: 'Although the double offices which were once concerned with the administration of the army are now placed under one responsible Minister, the tradition remains; and both within the walls of the War Office itself, and more especially between the War Office and the Horse

Guards, the habit is still to prefer a system of unnecessary check, double labour, and divided responsibility, to one of well-defined responsibility, simplicity, and reasonable confidence.' It is evident that at the bottom of their hearts Mr. Stansfeld and Lord Northbrook are pretty much of my mind as to the value of the Order in Council declaring the War Minister to be sole master. Of course you cannot by a mere *ipse dixit* alter the relation to others which a person of His Royal Highness's rank has maintained through a long course of years. Again, if we desire to have a truly national army, we must make it our endeavour to elevate the moral being of the soldier, and cause him to respect himself, and so win for his calling the respect of the mass of his countrymen. Among all the measures which during the few last years have been proposed or adopted for improving the condition of the British private, nothing has contributed so much to remove the distaste with which the working classes once regarded a soldier's career as the abolition of flogging. That degrading punishment was forbidden in peace by a majority of the House of Commons during the year 1868, and from the nature of the case it was virtually impossible for the House of Lords to reverse that decision. But, though it could not be reversed, it was discussed and criticised; and Hansard reports a speech in which His Royal Highness expresses the strongest regret and dissatisfaction at the course taken in the Lower House; and remarks that, 'Since garotting had been visited with flogging they had fewer cases of that crime than before.' Now these utterances are important in themselves, and doubly so as manifestations and outward symptoms of the spirit which governs the every-day administration of the Horse Guards. It is no abuse of His Royal Highness to say he is wedded to the old system; and no Minister, unless he is prepared to see his policy hopelessly wrecked, will commit to those who are wedded to the old system the charge of introducing and working the new. It is not in human nature it should be otherwise.

Colonel Anson objects to my quoting General Sir Thomas Franks against the Purchase system. It was not from lack of distinguished authority. Sir de Lacy Evans and Lord Clyde were no drawing-room soldiers; and Sir de Lacy was the leading assailant of the Purchase system in Parliament; while Lord Clyde stated in evidence before the Purchase

Commission that he would confine appointments in the army to the successful competitors in an open examination. And Sir William Mansfield, who served as Lord Clyde's chief of the staff in the Indian campaign; who lately commanded in chief in India, and who now holds the same office in Ireland; who has proved himself a master both in the field and in the bureau,—Sir William Mansfield says straight out that he would 'democratise the army, by inviting the people to the army according to broad principles of utility, and the motives by which men of all classes are induced to choose their lines of life. I am sure,' he says, 'that, until this is effected by some means or other, we shall go on patching at our old, worn-out, and, in a certain sense, discreditable institutions, without getting at the heart of the nation for military purposes.' Colonel Anson objects to my computation of the expense of abolishing Purchase as far too low; and his objection is endorsed by some ardent reformers who appear to like to rate as high as possible the sacrifice they would face in order to get rid of a bad system. But Colonel Anson must know that the computation was not mine, but that of a War Office Committee including Sir Henry Storks; and that it was not put forward as an inducement to abolish Purchase, but was an official counter-calculation to a much lower calculation put forward by an opponent of Purchase. Colonel Anson makes the usual mistake of imagining that we should have to pay every farthing sunk in commissions. This could not happen unless the army was disbanded at once. Sir H. Storks and the War Office Committee, having, as responsible men, to prepare a computation which, in case of the abolition of Purchase, would either be confirmed or discredited, took into account all the chances of death or promotion; and by their computation I shall abide till provided with a better. To judge by the tone of public meetings and the press of the United Kingdom, the country is prepared to pay the necessary price, whatever that price may be; and no wonder. If the Imperial correspondence which has been so mercilessly overhauled at Paris by the Provisional Government brought to life even five or six such pecuniary transactions as occur by hundreds every year in our army, all the newspapers of Europe would say that such revelations fully accounted for the disasters of the French arms. And yet Colonel Anson thinks that 'the question of

Purchase in the army might well be left for discussion in the House of Commons.' It has been left so far too long. How can the House of Commons take an unprejudiced view of this subject when all the military men in that House belong to the classes which profit by Purchase? Hitherto army reformers have always been met, in that House, by wholesale charges of ignorance of military detail. Last session a member who had spoken forcibly and justly against a job at the Horse Guards, was considered to be sufficiently answered by a remark that he had used the words 'Commander-in-Chief' instead of 'Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief.' It is not by such paltry jeers that the nation, in the person of its representatives, will be deterred from taking a far different interest from what it hitherto has done in its own army. There are unmistakeable signs that a national interest in the question is rapidly awakening. All the truest liberalism in the House of Commons is fast declaring itself against the existing system. The Liberal Associations of Leeds, Birmingham, and Liverpool are only waiting till they have arranged the important business connected with the election of school-boards to hold meetings on army reform at those great political and commercial centres; and the National Reform Union will hold a meeting at Manchester at the beginning of next month. And when the nation has once opened its eyes, there will be a speedy end of a system in which efficiency is sacrificed to idle show, and worth and capacity are nothing without a large balance at their bankers'. To enable Parliament to pronounce itself for or against a truly national system, I shall lay before it, probably on two different occasions, the following resolutions:—

1. That, as an essential condition of any effective re-organisation of the army, the Sale and Purchase of Commissions should be extinguished.
2. That the tenure of the Command-in-Chief should be so arranged that the Minister can freely avail himself of the best administrative talent from time to time existing in the British Army.
3. That the battalions of the line and the militia should forthwith be brought together into regiments, and that those regiments should be united in brigades, divisions, and corps, on the basis of local organisation; and, as far as possible, of local recruitment.

4. That the militia battalions should be officered by officers of the line, and partly by militia officers who have passed through a course of professional training at the head-quarters of the regiment resembling that obtaining in the Prussian army in the case of the one-year volunteers.
 5. That the men of the militia should be enlisted for not more than twelve years; of which the first year should be passed in continuous service at the head-quarters of the regiment.
 6. That as long as our navy is in an efficient condition, it will not be necessary to increase the number of the militia beyond what would raise each of our existing line regiments to the strength of three battalions.
 7. That the military, social, and financial interests of the country demand that short service in the line should eventually be the rule of our army.
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IV.

ADDRESS TO THE NATIONAL REFORM UNION AT MANCHESTER, DELIVERED ON DECEMBER 6, 1870.

THE profound impression produced by the successes of the German armies will do us a great deal more harm than good if we draw from them the wrong deductions, and apply the lessons to be learned from those successes to the gratification of our national vanity. There are two ideas now prevalent which we must learn to correct as soon as possible, or we shall only plunge still deeper into the bad courses in which we are now moving. The first, and most fatal, of these notions prevails widely throughout all ranks—the notion that the Prussian army is ‘a citizen army,’ ‘a national army,’ in which quantity goes for more than quality; that every Prussian citizen is a soldier; and that the best thing we can do is to set to work and subject every man in the United Kingdom to a certain amount of drill. So far is this from being the true solution of our difficulties, that we have actually at this moment many more men in the receipt of a certain amount of drill than we could brigade, victual, and equip with artillery in such a fashion as to make them

formidable in the field. When an enemy is already in triumphant possession of a part of the national territory, a brave and patriotic citizen force, however badly organised to begin with, soon becomes formidable enough to be of service. For the purpose of repelling an invader so promptly and effectually that the country shall not be overrun, the trade ruined, the finance bankrupt, and the social machinery brought to a standstill, every soldier in the country should be a man carefully drilled, bound to military service during a definite period in peace and war, absolutely in the hands of officers who have received a thorough professional training, and in their turn are absolutely in the hands of the superior military authorities. The State should not contribute to the support of any soldier or officer who does not fulfil these conditions. Eighteen months ago we were promised, in the speech introducing the army estimates, that every officer in our reserve forces should be made efficient, 'whatever his social status.' And yet to this day many of our volunteer companies are officered by overworked members of Parliament or men of business who can never spare a day to learn their duties; while it is no uncommon thing for gentlemen to hold commissions at the same time in the militia, the yeomanry, and the volunteers, or in some two out of the three. It is simply inconceivable that the State does not announce its intention of fixing a minimum of military knowledge, and insisting on every officer coming up to that minimum, even if he were the most influential constituent of the warmest supporter of the Government. Some journals have remonstrated with me for not including the volunteers in the resolutions I propose to lay before the House. My answer is that there must be some limit to the extent of a scheme brought forward by a private member, and that there are others far more qualified than myself to suggest the machinery by which our volunteer army should be organised and administered. On one point we must clearly insist: that a standard of efficiency, physical and professional, shall be set up, to which all volunteers must conform, whether officers or men; and that the State shall not pay a halfpenny for any man unless the State itself had approved him as a soldier, and unless he was prepared to give the State an effectual claim on his services, whether in peace or war.

Unless I am much mistaken in the volunteers, such a claim they are prepared to give. They are tired of playing at soldiers, and are everywhere asking to be weeded, armed, equipped, instructed, brought under stricter discipline and more defined responsibilities, and given their fixed and recognised place in a working organisation. The truth is that in Prussia the War Office, conscious as it must be of its extraordinary powers of administration, is far too sensible to dream of making every citizen into a soldier. No administrative system, however perfect, could prevent an army so constituted from turning into a helpless mass. The Prussian conscription takes only as many young men as will keep the regular army at a figure well within the resources of the country to support and of the Government to organise. After three years' service these same young men go for four years into the reserves, and then into the Landwehr. The young men who are not called on to serve in the regular army are liable, indeed, to be drafted in as recruits in case of a long war; and in the event of a great national agony, a *levée en masse* might be ordered through the medium of the Landsturm. Still it should never be forgotten, speaking roughly but correctly, that the Prussian army is not a citizen army, but an enormously large short-service army, and that the Prussian militia is composed of men still in the prime of life, who have served in the regular army. We should not aim at a slavish introduction of an exotic system, but, keeping to our old methods of national defence, we should imitate the Prussians in this, that we should have no more men than we want, and have those well in hand. With our powerful fleet, which renders it impossible for an enemy to throw more than a couple or so of army-corps on our coast, except under circumstances which would give us ample time for preparation, we should content ourselves with having our militia really efficient and well officered. Such a militia, 150,000 strong, might be maintained at the cost of a yearly draft of 13,500 militiamen, every one of whom should begin with a year's continuous drill. The country will submit to these sacrifices only on conditions. The wretched misgovernment of our army must cease, and, above all, the command of that army must be taken from the hands of a class and restored to the nation at large. Do not imagine

Englishmen will allow their sons to be taken for compulsory military service as long as the brokers and the jobbers are to arrange between them who are to lead our battalions.

I have told you of one incorrect notion of the Prussian system, which prevails in the workshop and the counting house. There is another which holds good in the backstairs and ante-chamber of the Horse Guards, and that is, that the Prussian victories are due to the army being officered on strictly aristocratic principles. But we ought to adopt the merits and not the defects of our neighbours, and there is nothing which is so deeply regretted by enlightened and liberal Germans as the gulf which separates the nobility from the people. This distinction of classes, shown in a thousand forms most vexatious and puerile, forms the only real ground for the taunt of barbarism which France is so fond of levelling against Germany. In marriage, in social gatherings, in admittance to Court, the spirit of privilege rules the German world; and the same spirit naturally prevails in the army, though not to the same extent which its English admirers and would-be imitators would have us believe. But there is quite enough of it to justify the words used at Bristol lately by Mr. Kirkman Hodgson, when he said that 'never in the history of the world was there such an instrument of Tory policy as the German army. It was officered in such a manner as to make it the most terrible and most lasting instrument any despot could desire.' The author of the article 'Germany, France, and England,' in the 'Edinburgh Review,' says: 'Prussia is a country rigidly aristocratic, and we trust that the adjustment which has led there to such admirable results may be found to be, either in its earlier or later form, applicable to our wants.' Does this mean that no plain citizen is to hold a commission until all men of title and family have been first served? Or is the real meaning one worthy of a great statesman; approved of by Lord Clyde, Sir de Lacy Evans, Sir W. Mansfield, and the fighting and working leaders of our army; consistent with the policy carried out by the present Government in the departments of our civil service? Does it mean that appointments are to go to the aristocracy of education, and promotion to the aristocracy of professional merit, and that wealth is to be

allowed to tell in so far only as it can provide the candidate with a more thorough training for a competition open to the entire nation? And before we discuss whether we ought to borrow the Prussian aristocratic system we must be sure that we can borrow it. The German aristocrat is poor and laborious, and, in obedience to the habits and traditions of centuries, submits cheerfully to the strictest and most painful military apprenticeship. Is this the sort of aristocracy we get by the medium of the purchase system? I have hitherto quoted the opinions of the opponents of purchase. Let us see what the Duke of Cambridge says before the committee on army organisation. He says, 'I think a great many men enter the army who really do not mean to make a regular profession of it. I think they want to try it for three or four years, and see whether they like it.' What would Von Moltke think of young gentlemen who 'do not mean to make a regular profession' of the army? We know what was thought of them by the great King who has set the tone of Prussian military men. When a captain who left the army in expectation of marrying an heiress applied to re-engage on the failure of his hopes, Frederic replied, 'The army is not a public-house, where people may run in and out as they please. Since this man has once left the service, he can have no ambition, and I hate such officers.' For good or evil the Prussian is a real aristocratic system; while ours is a plutocracy tempered by social interest. They take men of birth. We take men of wealth, with a certain special advantage for the fashionable. And what a spirit it fosters! I have heard an officer say in the House of Commons that if you promoted a man who had been in a village draper's shop, you would 'destroy the whole tone of a regiment.' I am not for the wholesale promotion of elderly sergeants; but I never heard that the tone of French battalions was destroyed by the advancement of enterprising, clever young men like Hoche and Pichegru.

As long as officers purchase their commissions, you cannot insist on their possessing the qualities demanded by their special branch of the service. You cannot supplement the money test by an effectual test of military capacity. The present war has shown the immense importance that attaches to the existence of professional knowledge and high moral and intellectual qualities in the subalterns of

the light cavalry. They are detached singly on the most delicate service. They require to be well acquainted with practical geography and topography. They must judge rapidly and accurately the strength of a fortified place; the number of troops that proximately are quartered in a region of country; the state of the roads, bridges, and defiles; the resources which a district could supply for the victualling of an army. They must, above all, have the moral qualities of prudence, consideration, and self-restraint, which alone will enable them to traverse a hostile country with any hope of safety for themselves or their commands. But, unfortunately, in our light cavalry regiments the price of commissions ranges very high, and we must put up with the men who can afford to buy them. This autumn, looking casually in the papers, I noticed that light cavalry officers had in six instances been punished by the police magistrates in the space of about as many weeks. The case of misconduct at Edinburgh apparently took place at the time of a royal visit, during which I suppose the military were charged with keeping order in the city. How often do officers of the Royal Engineers, who do not purchase, appear before the magistrates? And how would such cases be dealt with under the aristocratic system of Prussia? When a certain Countess asked Frederic to admit her son into his army as a good training school for a dissipated young man, the King answered, 'I look out for good officers, but the debauched ones I send packing. Such people, of whatever rank, I think no acquisition to any service.' The frightful revelations in the Bankruptcy Court as to the state of the Royal Horse Guards some years ago ought to have opened the eyes of the authorities to the consequences of keeping up certain regiments as a playground for the idle, instead of as a workshop for the well-informed and industrious. But the interests which are bound up in Purchase are too powerful and too subtle to allow a stone of the rotten erection to be touched. Purchase is the excuse for paying 40,000*l.* a year of the national money to the Army Agents for doing work which should be done by the Regimental Paymasters, or should never be done at all. Far the largest part of this gigantic sum goes into the pockets of one firm, which is strong with the strength of ancient and wide-spread influence and connection. Such a deliberate sacrifice of public economy to private gain is a permanent

reflection upon the spirit of British administration. Then, again, it is impossible to touch Purchase without making arrangements for rewarding generals by means of a just and impartial scheme of salary and pension, in which all shall share and share alike. But such a scheme would involve the absorption of the sinecure Colonelcies, by means of which one man gets his 1,800*l.* a year, while another struggles on with what is comparatively a pittance. Nothing but the strongest expression of the popular will in the House of Commons can induce the Horse Guards to part with this enormous patronage. We are told that these Colonelcies are to the army what pensions are to the civil service. But the first condition of a pension is that it should not be enjoyed at the same time and in addition to salary. Sir G. Grey and Mr. Disraeli have pensions of 2,000*l.* a year; but while the one was Home Secretary and the other First Lord of the Treasury the payment of their pensions was suspended, and they got only their official salaries. But at the Horse Guards the Commander-in-Chief, in addition to his salary of 4,000*l.* a year, gets his colonelcy of 2,200*l.* The Adjutant-General has his 1,000*l.* a year as a colonel, in addition to his 2,000*l.* as a working official. While the military secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, besides drawing 1,500*l.* a year as salary, gets his 1,000*l.* for his sinecure. And what duties does he perform in return for these emoluments? Sir Edward Lugard, the Under-Secretary of State for War, says: 'My idea is that the military secretary is the mouthpiece of the Duke of Cambridge—his amanuensis—to save his Royal Highness trouble.' So, in addition to a private secretary and four aides-de-camp, we are paying a man 2,500*l.* a year for being a mouthpiece and an amanuensis,—for doing for his Royal Highness what is done for the Board of Admiralty by a post captain of the navy on 300*l.* a year and his pittance of half-pay! And this state of things exists in the War Office after it has been reformed according to the newest lights! What stronger proof can there be that Mr. Cardwell is unable to carry out a liberal policy in the teeth of Horse Guards opposition? There is no use in army reformers calling our army a class monopoly, unless they give the country facts to prove their assertion. Sir John Pakington said, in the House of Commons, that he was sorry I had lent myself to the fallacy about the army being

an aristocratic monopoly. 'Take up the Army List,' he said, 'and read the list of names. There are not many well known to Englishmen as aristocratic names; but nine times out of ten a lot of the oddest names that can be imagined. Indeed, it always seems to me that the oddest names of the country get into the Army List.' Yes, Sir John, but into what part of it? Into the list of generals and sinecurists? Into the favoured regiments quartered in the agreeable places where fashion dwells? Or into the hard-working regiments which spend their time in unhealthy stations far away from the haunts of pleasure and of influence? The brigade of Guards is the most fortunate branch of the service. The pay is higher than elsewhere. An officer who commands a company of the Guards gets 4s. a day more than an officer who commands a company in the line. The Guards have special allowances of a large amount. They are allowed to manage their own recruiting and hospital expenses out of a lump sum paid by the State. The officers on guard have 5,000*l.* a year from the nation to improve their table. They have each a step in rank above an officer in the line who performs parallel duties; and in the services, civil, military, or naval, precedence is valued (and I hope will ever be so valued) more than pecuniary advantage. They are certain to be sent wherever there is hard fighting, which is, indeed, among their choicest privileges: but they are never despatched to deadly climates or dull quarters. London, Windsor, Dublin, with an occasional visit to Canada, give them the great advantage of keeping constantly within the circle where good things are going. In town they do not live in barracks with their men, but are scattered about in lodgings, or in their own or their fathers' houses. They have no difficulty in obtaining leave of absence for shooting, hunting, and foreign travel. I have been told that an officer in command of a company is frequently absent from his duties for eight months out of the twelve. And to what class do these lucky officers belong? The number of titles affords a not unfair test of the degree of wealth and social influence that exists among any given body of individuals. Now, in the Army List of 1869, among the 227 officers of the Foot Guards you find one Prince, three Earls, three Viscounts, seven Lords, and 45 Honourables, (in all 59 titled men,) in the three regiments. Now, (to contrast with these the social condition of the

working officers), we will not pick our regiments, but take the first three that have one or more battalions on foreign service. These three regiments have four out of their six battalions quartered in India. They number between them 232 officers, and the only title which they have amongst them is one Victoria Cross. When once the nation has realised these facts and figures, the system is doomed. The people who have swept away so many monopolies, civil, religious, commercial, political, and administrative, will not long endure this monopoly of military position and emoluments. They who have such a keen eye for privilege and injustice in all other institutions of the State will awaken to the knowledge that the purchase system is nothing more nor less than an indirect but most potent method for keeping in the hands of a class all that our army gives which is worth having. And not only the bulk of the people, but the fathers of the middle class, clergymen, men of business, doctors, and lawyers, will come forward to claim for their sons the birthright of Englishmen—the right of serving their country, with a due expectation of advancement and remuneration. I do not hesitate to say that, unless the Government commences by clearing out the Horse Guards, any plan of army re-organisation which they propose will be a failure; and any scheme for amalgamating the militia and the line, unless it is grounded on the complete and instant abolition of purchase, can be nothing but a nostrum. The question is getting beyond the range of controversy. Everyone who has heard both sides is convinced against the existing state of things, unless his eyes are blinded by personal interest, or official predilections and habits of thought. The opposition to reform has become hollow, obstinate, and selfish. There is absolutely no great body of conservative feeling in the country on this subject, such as exists on religious and political questions. The nation has pronounced against the Horse Guards theory; and the hope of the party of reaction rests exclusively on high social influences—influences which have a fatal power as long as, in dealing with matters of public import, leading men of both parties are swayed by tenderness for their own career.





